

One euro. One house. One plot. Nordhalben tries a new approach

11 September 2026

After WORK.LAND.LIFE, Nordhalben takes another unexpected step

To revitalise a municipality, different strands of work need to be brought together into a coherent plan. Concept illustration: 1-Euro-Haus.de / AI-generated.

Nordhalben/Hof, 11 September 2026 – One euro for a house, with the land included. It may sound like a joke at first, but the offer in Nordhalben, Bavaria, Germany, is serious. The municipality in the Upper Franconian district of Kronach is selling two vacant houses it owns for one euro each, including their plots.

Not a sell-off, but a strategy

The unusual price is part of a new municipal approach to vacant buildings. Nordhalben does not simply want to get rid of the houses. It wants to attract people who will renovate, invest and stay. The offer is therefore aimed at applicants with a viable renovation, financing and use plan, not at the highest bidder.

The municipality of Nordhalben alone decides on applications, viewings, selection and sales. The municipality and future owners also agree on renovation and future-use conditions, which are set out in the contract. First Mayor Michael Wunder is personally involved in marketing the properties. For binding information, the municipality is the direct point of contact. The houses are presented on 1-Euro-Haus.de .

There is more than one answer to vacancy

Nordhalben is not relying on a single measure. Not every building that has stood empty for years can be saved at a reasonable cost. In the past, the municipality has demolished individual older houses and used the freed-up space to open up its tightly built town centre and create room for greenery. Such open spaces improve the living environment, reduce sealed ground and help densely built areas heat up less during hot summers.

But demolition is only one option. Where a building's location, structure and potential make it worthwhile, older houses should have a new future. That is where the €1-house model comes in.

Work where others go on holiday

Nordhalben sees living and working as connected. Nordwald Space offers modern coworking and coliving facilities in the heart of the town. Workstations, meeting rooms and apartments give self-employed people, freelancers and others who can work remotely a chance to get to know life and work in the Franconian Forest.

WORK.LAND.LIFE – Landleben auf Probe (“Try rural life”) is aimed at people whose work does not tie them permanently to a big city. Selected participants can live and work at Nordwald Space for several weeks and experience everyday life in a rural community with a fibre-optic connection.

A setting that works for families

Anyone considering a move to Nordhalben is choosing more than a house: they are choosing a place to live. The town has a primary school and a kindergarten, both important for families with children. Clubs, cultural activities and volunteering shape local community life.

Nordwaldhalle is one of the region's largest sports and event venues. The natural swimming pool offers another leisure option in summer. The forests of the Franconian Forest and the Ködeltalsperre reservoir are on the doorstep.

Nature as a municipal responsibility

Protecting biodiversity is also important in Nordhalben. The municipality was one of ten Bavarian model municipalities in the “Marktplatz der biologischen Vielfalt” project and developed its own local biodiversity strategy. Nature, species diversity and municipal development are considered together.

Many parts, one overall approach

Nordhalben does not pursue just one idea; it connects different strands into an overall approach. Nordwald Space creates opportunities for people who work remotely. WORK.LAND.LIFE lets people try living in the town. Fibre-optic internet, schools, the kindergarten, clubs and leisure facilities provide a foundation for staying long term. The €1 houses offer interested people a route to ownership and give vacant buildings a new perspective. Demolishing houses that cannot be preserved creates green spaces and improves the living environment.

Step by step, the result is an approach that does more than address individual problems: it develops the town as a whole, as a lively community in the Franconian Forest that brings together housing, work, nature and community life.

“Nordhalben shows that a municipality does not have to look at vacancy in isolation. Demolishing buildings that cannot be preserved, creating new green spaces, retaining houses that can be renovated, coworking, fibre-optic internet, commercial development and protecting biodiversity can all be part of one strategy,” says Jürgen Klausmann, editorial lead for 1-Euro-Haus.de.

“A €1 house alone will not solve a municipality's structural challenges. But it can be another useful part of the picture. We would be delighted if the two houses reached people who are not just looking for a property, but are ready to think about the town, the building and a long-term future in Nordhalben.”

About Nordhalben

Nordhalben is in the Upper Franconian district of Kronach in northern Bavaria, Germany. Located in the Franconian Forest, the municipality combines living close to nature with local facilities, a wide range of volunteering and modern options for working remotely.

About 1-Euro-Haus.de

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